

7.1 Statement of Significance

7.1.1 Existing Local Item Statement of Significance (OEH Database)

The following is the existing statement of significance which is listed for the subject site as part of the local heritage item listing for the site:

The former Ultimo Power House, dating from 1899, is historically significant for being the original generating station for the supply of electricity to power the tramway network throughout Sydney. It was also one of the largest and most important generating stations in NSW for many years and has associations with the electrification of the suburban railway system and with the general reticulation of electrical power. It was the first place where turbine driven alternators were tried in Australia, in 1905. It was amongst the largest of any generating stations operating in Australia with Ultimo and the White Bay Power being purpose built for the Railway and Tramways Department generating stations. The abandoned status of the power station and tramway system provided a potential to reveal a past transport system which ceased in favour of motor buses, which was underway from the 1950s.

The building dates from one of the key period of layers for the development of Ultimo as a direct result of subdivision of the Harris and Macarthur Estates and industrial redevelopment of the area at the turn of the century.

It represents a good example of a Federation industrial building which makes a positive contribution to the streetscape. The subsequent alterations undertaken for the building's conversion to the Powerhouse Museum is significant both for its successful re-use of the buildings and as a modern design, awarded the Sulman medal.

7.1.2 Proposed Statement of Significance (National Trust)

The following is the proposed Statement of Significance for the item, should it be listed by Heritage NSW as originally submitted by the National Trust:

The former Ultimo Power House is of State significance historically for being the first large state-owned electricity generating station in NSW and the original generating station for the supply of electricity to power the electric tramway network throughout Sydney. It was one of the largest and most important generating stations in NSW for many years and has associations with the electrification of the suburban tramway and railway systems and with the general reticulation of electrical power in Sydney. It was the site where most major technological advancements in electrical generation, including steam turbines and large-scale, alternating - current generation, were trialled by NSW electricity authorities.

The station also played a major part in the development of the Ultimo/Pymont area. The power station buildings are a landmark group of buildings, which relate closely to the visual and architectural industrial context of the area. The Boilerhouse building was, in its day, one of the largest brickwork structures in the state and the chimneys were significant Sydney landmarks for seventy years.

Furthermore, the adaptive work undertaken for the station's conversion to the Powerhouse Museum is significant both for its successful re-use of the buildings and successful integration of old and new buildings; the new building was awarded the Sulman Medal by the RAI in 1988.

The Ultimo Power House was adapted to house the Museum of Applied Arts and Technology (later, the Powerhouse Museum), the principal museum of technology, manufacturing, science and craft in NSW and retains the historical, aesthetic and cultural associations of this Museum dating back to the International Exhibition in the late nineteenth century. It is an ongoing repository for the exhibition of the finest examples of the skill and industry of the country and has an educational and research role in these areas as part of its operation.

In this context, it has social significance for many Sydneysiders for whom the Powerhouse Museum represents an important educational and cultural experience and a communal commitment to honouring the past and those who have been significant in the evolution of modern Australian society.

7.1.3 Proposed Statement of Significance (Cracknell Lonergan)

In our comparison of the existing Local Item Statement of Significance and the proposed Statement of Significance submitted by the National Trust, the following comments are made, with a recommendation that the Statement of Significance be reworded to take the following matters into consideration:

- The alterations of the site for the conservation of the disused powerhouse structure should not be described as 'significant', rather, it only represents the adaptive reuse of the buildings in a post-modernist design, awarded the 1988 Sulman Medal.
- A clear distinction must be established between the significance of the MAAS Collection and the Ultimo Powerhouse site. The significance of the two, for its aesthetic, cultural and historical merits cannot be conflated to be interwoven as implied in the National Trust listing. The subject site is not an 'ongoing repository' as it would fail to consider the MAAS collection held at all of its other sites, but the collection can be described as such.

7.2 Proposed Update to Existing Conservation Management Plan

As part of any future strategy for the conservation and adaptation of the site for future use, a detailed Conservation Management Plan should accompany any development application for the site. This CMP should provide a comprehensive guideline of management and interpretation policies and be in line with the standard guidelines of Heritage NSW. As a reference point, the original 2003 Conservation Management Plan by Architectural Projects P/L should be considered as the starting point and adapted to suit current requirements, building upon the fabric analysis and policies first established at the turn of the century.

Key updates to the CMP should attempt to address:

- Demolition of significant fabric to the Harris Street frontage of the Wran Building and other characteristics (colour scheme, follies etc...) of the Post-modernist architecture and whether this affects the 'heritage' significance of the Wran building.
- Opportunities for interpretation of the original Federations structures and better consideration of the original internal layout to reflect the original location of turbines and generators, forming a more coherent curatorial strategy for the site.
- Opportunities for interpretation of the chimneys which have been demolished and were not successfully interpreted (externally) to promote the sense of a 'landmark' structure.
- Opportunities for public space interpretation to promote the history of the site's link to tramways.
- Opportunities for better access and linkages to the Goods Line and public connections to Darling Harbour.
- Critical reappraisal of the site and its locality, in light of substantial changes and developments within the Darling Harbour precinct and ongoing developments in the area.

7.3 Proposed Future Adaptive Reuse of Site

In recognising the existing significance of the site and its local listing in particular, consideration should be given to the future adaptation of the historic structures on site, with an improved interpretation strategy which takes on board the original recommendations of the CMP as discussed previously in Section 7.2.

Since the initial development of the Powerhouse Museum in 1988, substantial developments in adaptive reuse have been implemented in various projects across the world, lifting the standard of heritage conservation and surgical intervention into such buildings. Reference should be drawn from such exemplar ideas and works in any future adaptive reuse of the site to maintain the integrity of the original fabric and in particular, to re-emphasise the public nature of the site and the possible future socio-cultural presence on the site.

Recent developments which may be useful in considering the future adaptation of the Ultimo Powerhouse site includes:

Tate Modern, formerly Bankside Power Station

London, United Kingdom

Considered the contemporary post-millennial benchmark for adaptive reuse, this project houses the Tate's contemporary art collection in site specific galleries, whilst the major turbine hall has been interpreted as a flexible entry and public art gallery. Of particular importance is the site's commitment to public access, with the main turbine hall and foyer spaces being free access, enabling opportunities for the general public to enjoy temporary installations and regard the historic fabric of the site.

Battersea Power Station Redevelopment

London, United Kingdom

An ongoing under-construction project for the conversion of the Battersea powerstation into a commercial and public art space, emphasis is once again placed on not cluttering up existing multi-storey volumes, with open galleries and corridors connecting offices lined across the exterior fabric and an internal atrium created. One particular 'quirk' occurs as part of the reconstruction of the chimneys, where a new observation glass elevator is constructed to offer a unique interpretation of heritage fabric.

Tai Kwun Centre for the Arts

Hong Kong S.A.R.

Conversion of a gaol complex into a performing arts and artist-in-residence hub, the Twi Kwun centre provides clear demarcation between conserved (historic) and contemporary fabric, with a variety of spaces linked by outdoor courtyards and squares, freely accessible to the public, consisting of retail and dining opportunities.

7.0 Recommendations & Policies

Tate Modern, London, UK

The primary turbine hall space has been adapted into a fully open public art atrium, with clear identification of old and new fabric enabling interpretation and various temporary public art exhibitions to take place.



Battersea Power Station, London, UK

As part of the interpretation strategy, the chimneys of the power station have been transformed into glass observation elevators, providing visitors with a unique experience of the history and view of London West.



Tai Kwun Centre for the Arts, Hong Kong

Careful interpretation of traditional Chinese tiles into contemporary facade systems enables a juxtaposition of new performing arts spaces with the existing heritage buildings which form the precinct of retail and dining spaces.



8.1 Conclusion

This report has sought to undertake a detailed review of the National Trust's proposed listing and provided an individualised deconstruction of the reasons for the proposed listing, critically assessing against both the NSW Heritage Guidelines and having regard to other relevant heritage inclusions and exclusions. In compiling a review of literature around the existing local listing, as well as the history of both the site and the collection of the MAAS, it is ultimately the conclusion of this report that the subject site does not warrant a heritage listing at the NSW State level with regard to the proposal forwarded by the National Trust. This conclusion has been reached for the following reasons:

- The existing Ultimo Powerhouse buildings have been adversely impacted by substantial alterations and additions which have resulted in removal/non-restoration of original fabric (such as machinery and chimney stacks), thus reducing its overall integrity, and reducing the ability for interpretation as a powerhouse. In comparison to other State Listed buildings and significant powerhouses, particularly the White Bay power station, the intactness, integrity and potential of the site is not of the same quality or degree of significance to warrant a state listing.
 - The 1980s Additions, primarily confined to the Wran building, whilst providing some merit and architectural interest and clearly of a particular post-modernist architectural period, does not, in and of itself meet the criterion for listing at a state level for aesthetic or technical reasons. The substantive alterations made to the original 1988 project indicates that the building does not 'withstand the test of time' and subsequent alterations have substantially diluted the original intent and quality of the 1988 additions.
 - The social value between the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and the subject site can be dated only to 1988, with the opening of the museum. The history and growth of the collection is not directly and exclusively linked to the site and its connection to the site is not to a degree of significance which warrants a listing at the State Level.
 - The social value between the community of the MAAS, including curators, exhibitors, artists, visitors, whilst important at a local community level, is arguably more directly linked to the social and cultural connection of the collection (as a form of intangible heritage) rather than to the subject site specifically.
- In concluding that the subject site does not meet the threshold for listing at a State Level and does not meet the threshold for including the 1988 Wran Buildings to the listing, our report provided a series of recommendations on the future management. In summary, our recommendations are:

- The site's heritage values are appropriately managed through the partial listing on the City of Sydney LEP.
- Any future management of the site should have regard to the original Conservation Management Plan prepared by Architectural Projects Pty Ltd in 2003, and indeed an updated Conservation Management Plan should be prepared by suitably qualified heritage experts prior to any substantial alterations and additions to the site.
- The Statement of Significance for the existing Local Listing should be updated to reflect the buildings listed, with additional historic details and information provided in reference to the original CMP and in the updated statement supplied in this report.
- Opportunities for further interpretation in accordance with the original CMP should be considered and in particular, re-emphasis of the 'powerhouse' history of the site should be considered and integrated into future developments of the site.
- Opportunities for future adaptive reuse should be considered for any proposed future development on the site and a publicly accessible socio-cultural presence should be maintained and enhanced on the site.

Peter Lonergan

Director, Cracknell & Lonergan Architects Pty Ltd

Introduction

Peter J. Lonergan is the director of practice and nominated architect (NSW Registration No. 5983) of Cracknell & Lonergan Architects (CLA) Pty Ltd, a private practice established with Julie Cracknell in 1984. Together, Peter and Julie have accumulated over thirty years of experience in the fields of architecture, interior design, heritage conservation, exhibition design and expert consultancy in town planning. As director of practice, Peter has not only been involved in the design of multiple works, but also served as a heritage consultant and consultant in the fields of SEPP65, SEPPARH, Clause 4.6, and various other planning advisory bodies. Today, Peter continues to serve as director of architectural design at CLA, overseeing a diverse range of projects throughout the Sydney Metropolitan Area, with a combined contract value exceeding AUD\$50 Million.

Formal Qualifications

BArchitecture University of New South Wales (UNSW) BScArchitecture (Hons) UNSW

MBEnv (Building Conservation) UNSW

Certificate Sustainable Design University of Sydney (USYD)

Architecture – Key Examples

Miller Street, Cammeray, Residential Flat Building

Premier Street, Neutral bay, Residential Flat Building

Lavoni Street, Mosman, Residential Development

Restoration of Jarjum College, Redfern, Sydney, for the Jesuit Fathers, St. Aloysius College

The Pemulwuy Project. Redevelopment of “The Block”, Redfern, Sydney, for the Aboriginal Housing Corporation

Heritage Conservation – Key Examples

Heritage Consultant & Supervision, Mechanics School of Arts (The Arthouse Hotel), Pitt Street, Sydney

Heritage Consultant & Supervision, Masonic Temple, North Sydney

Heritage Supervision and Heritage Architect, St. Clements Church, Marrickville

Heritage Consultant & Conservation Management Plan, Redfern’s Cottage, Minto

Heritage Consultant, Rosebank College, Five Dock

Public Art and Exhibition Design – Key Examples

Yininmadyemi - Thou didst let fall (by artist Tony Albert), Hyde Park, Sydney, Australia

Always was, Always will Be (by artist Reko Rennie), Oxford Street, Sydney, Australia

Murri Totem Poles (by artist Reko Rennie), La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

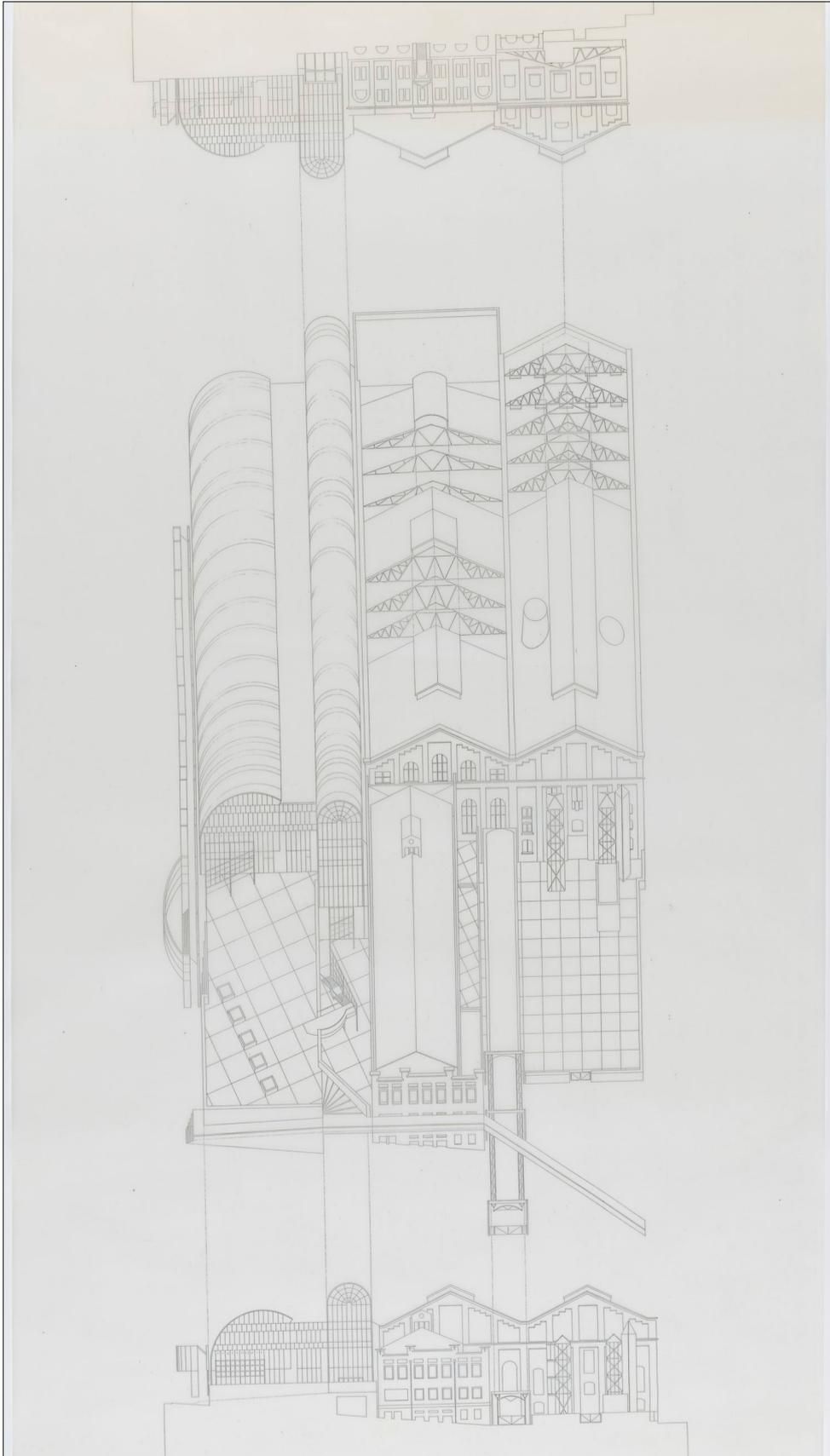
Papunya Tula, Central Termini, Rome, for the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, Australia

Gabriel Pizzi, Australian Embassy, Paris, France

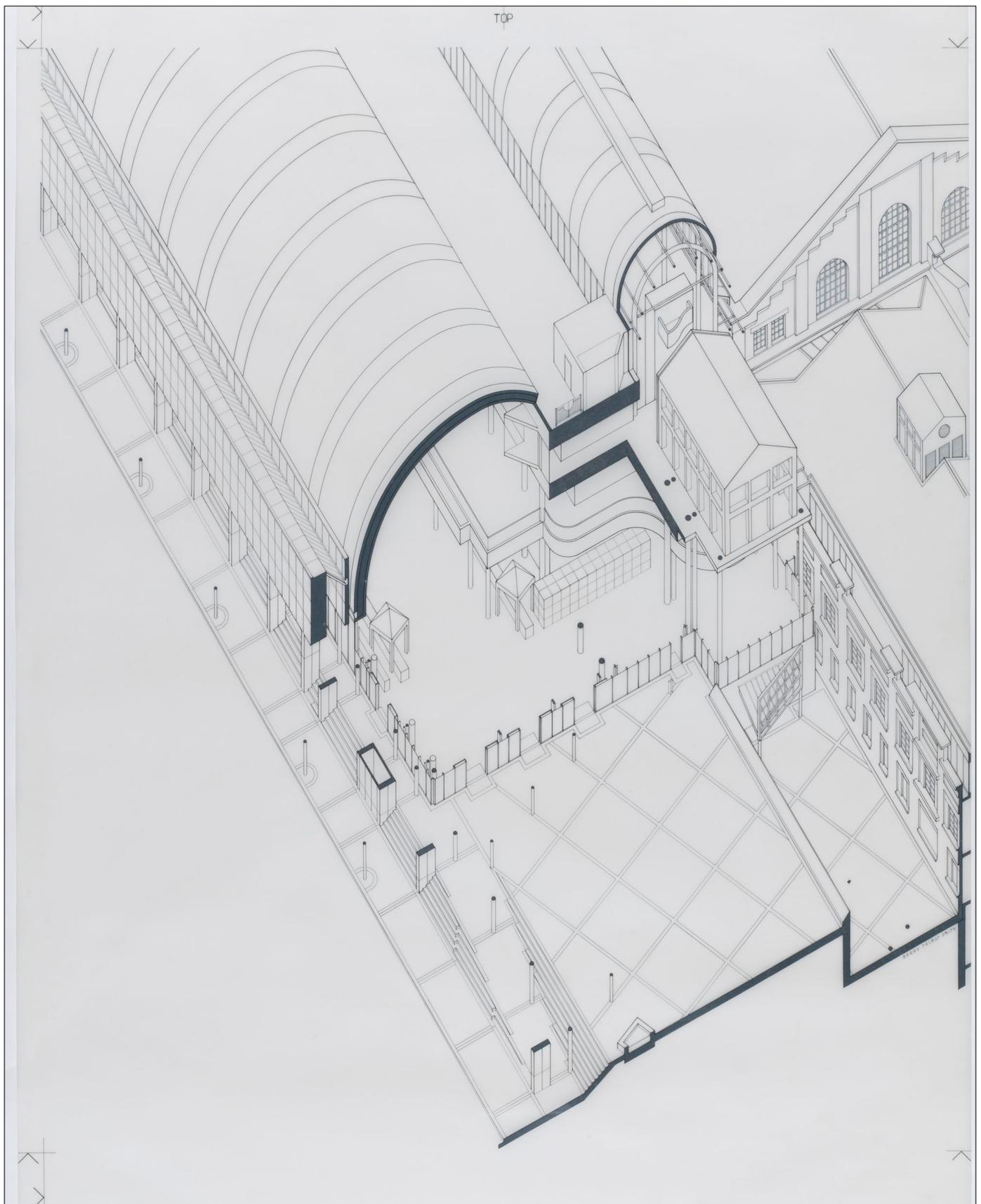
Musee du quai Branly at the Australian Embassy in Paris, for the Australia Council for the Arts, Paris, France

Design and project management of Indigenous Art Commission at Musee du quai Branly (2500m² of permanent public art in the current Presidential Project (with Ateliers Jean Nouvel), Paris, France

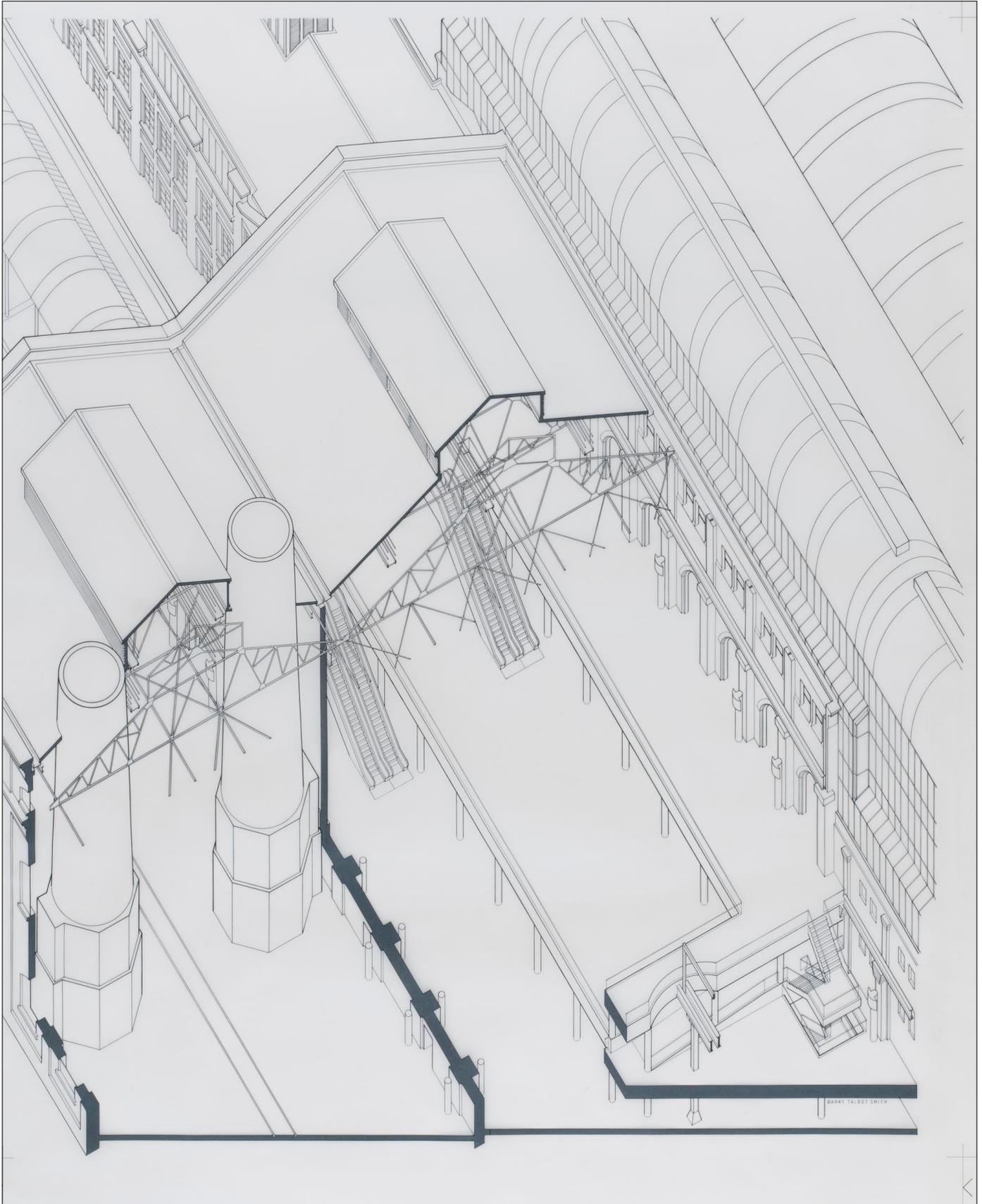
10.0 Appendix B: Archival Drawings - 1988 Additions (MAAS Collection)



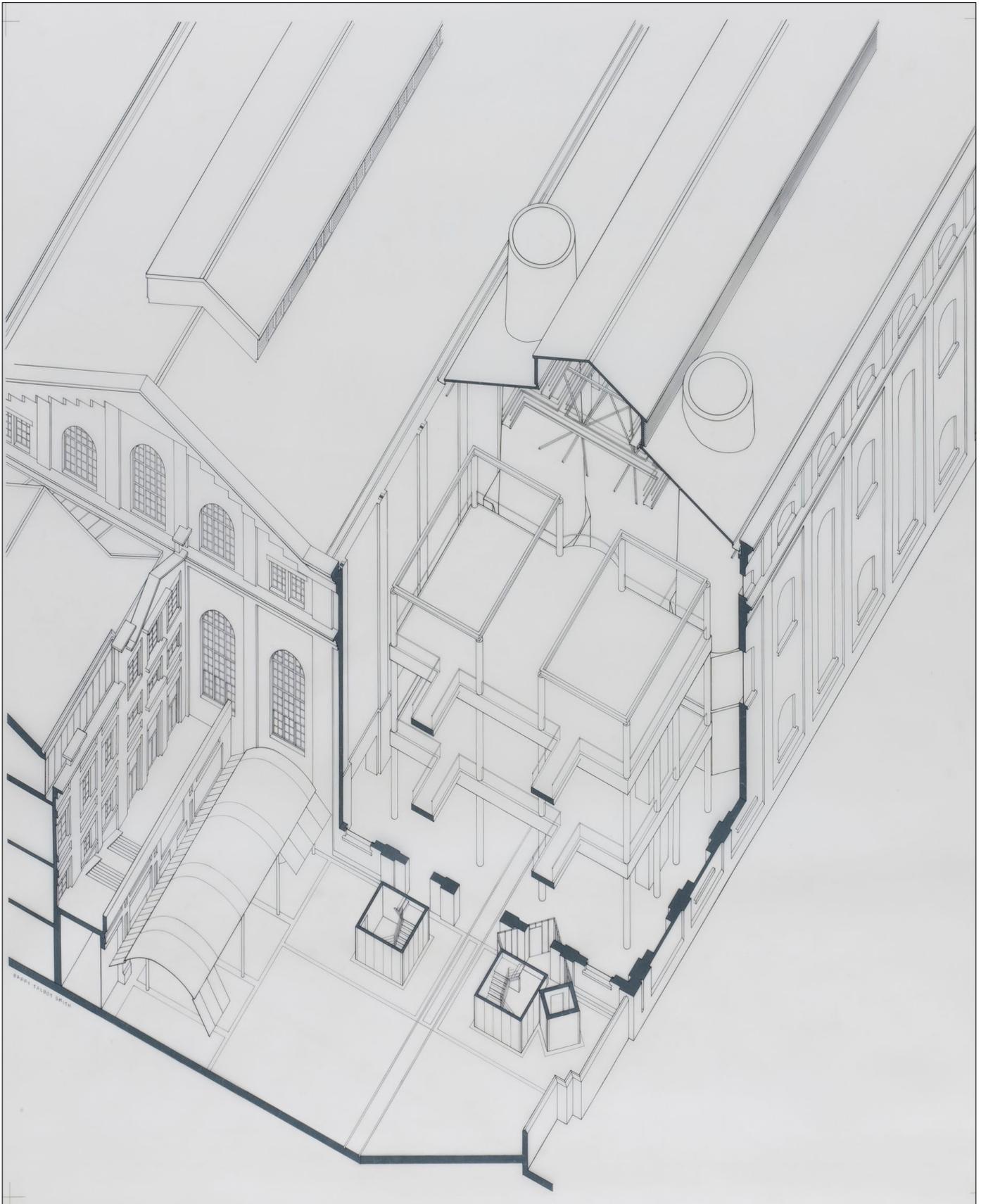
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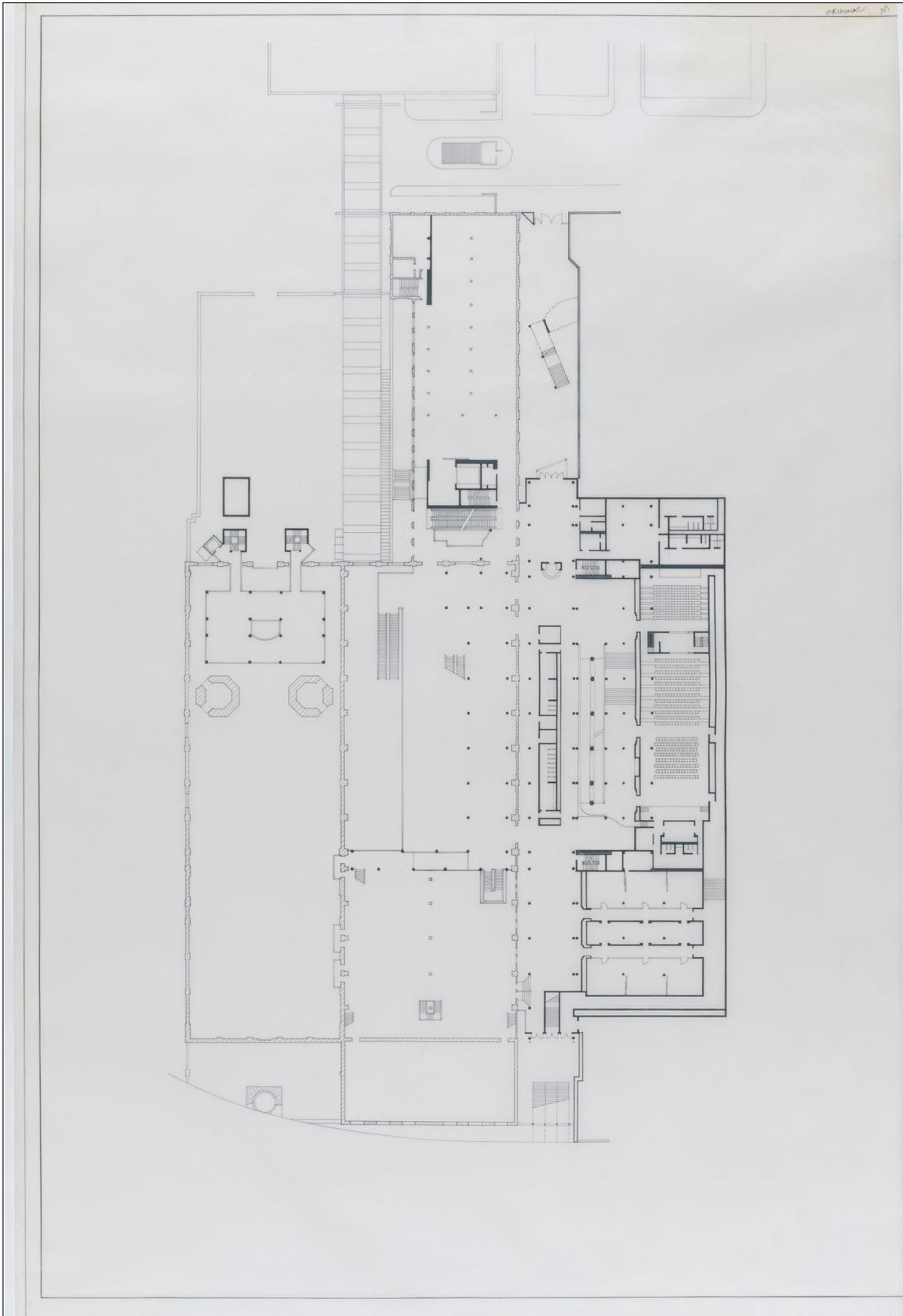
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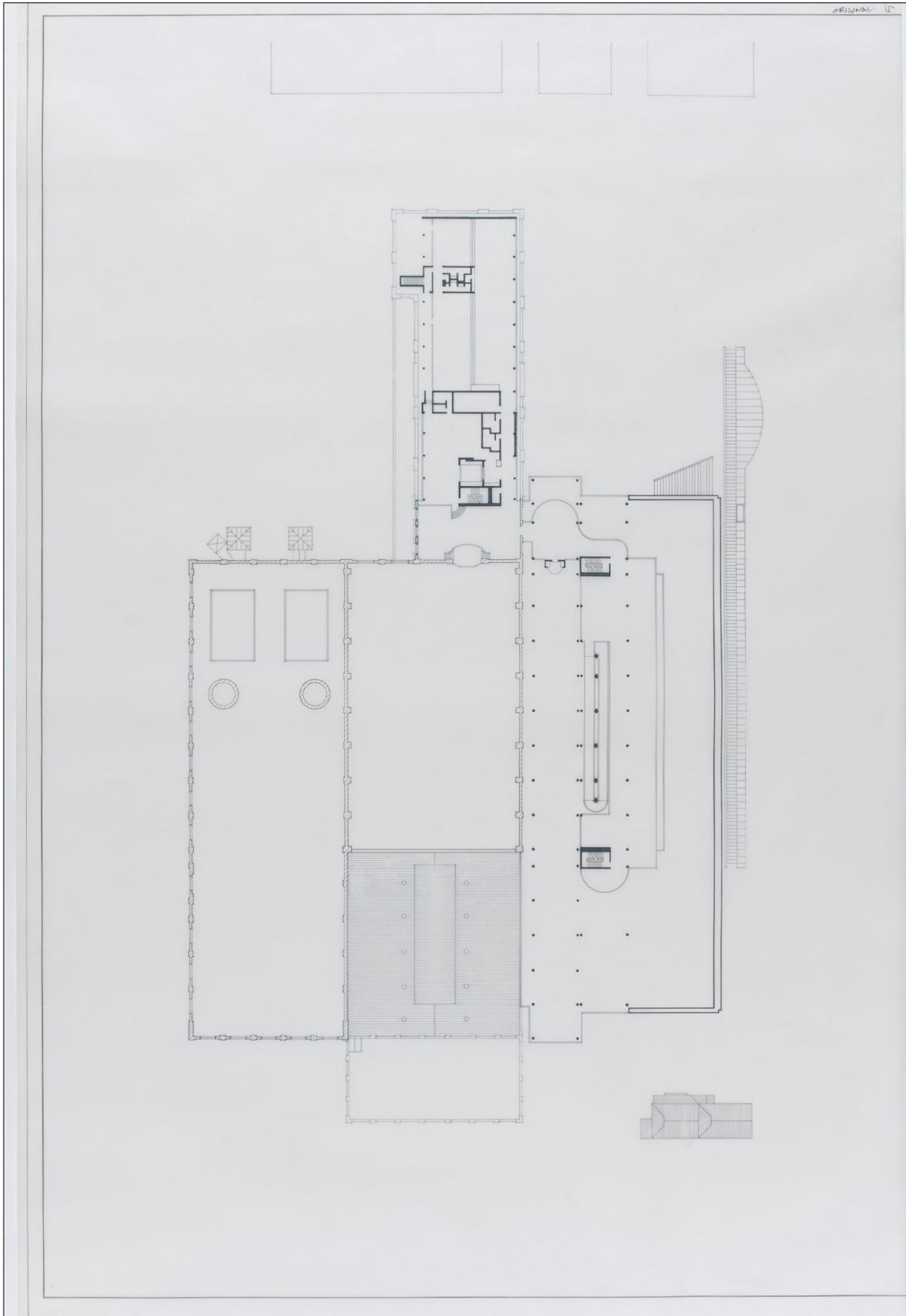
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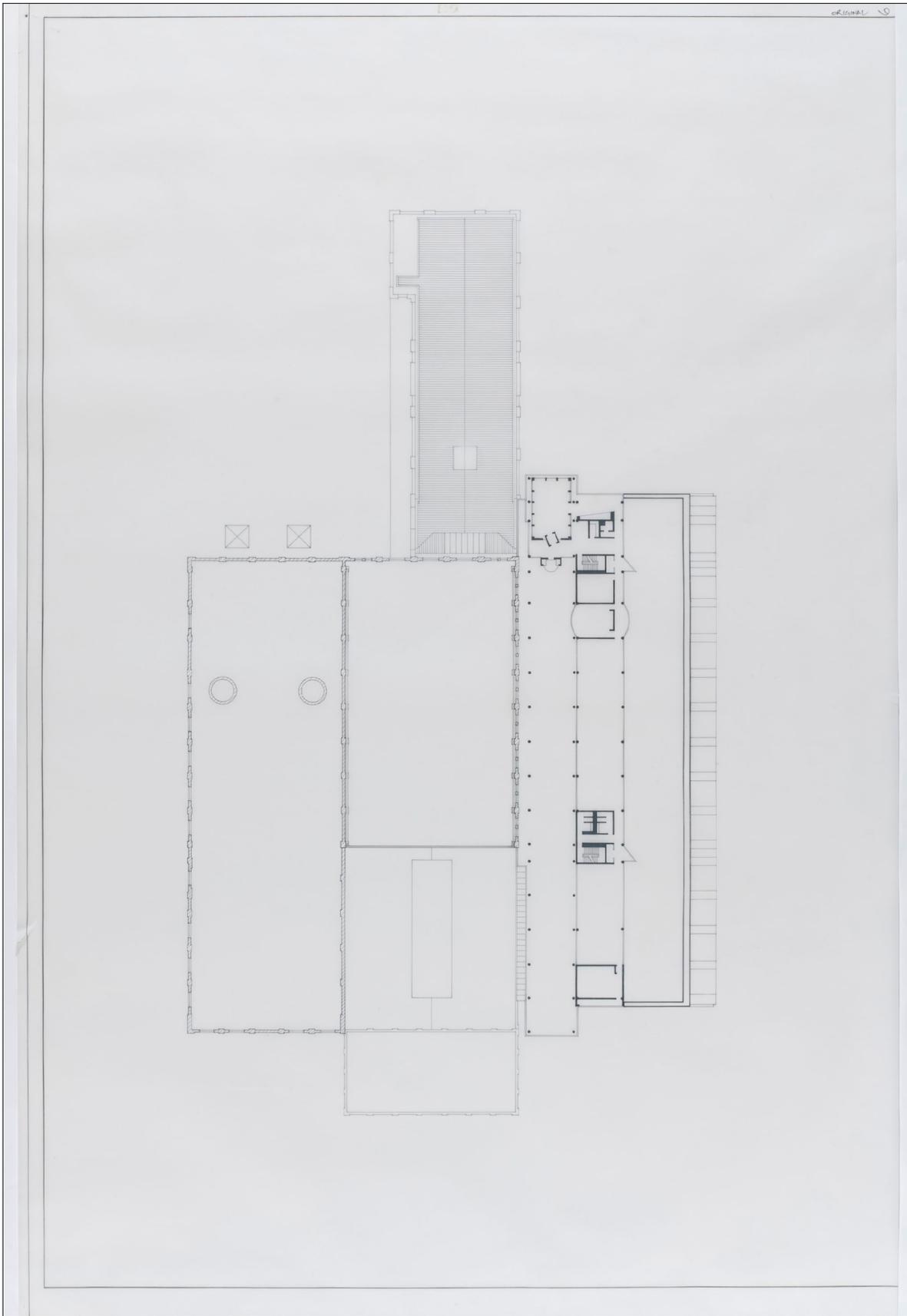
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**President's Award For Recycled Buildings
 The Interiors Award For Interior Design
 Zelman Cowen Award Finalist**

**Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
 NSW Public Works
 Architects
 Design Consultants
 Peter Marshall**

first project ever to have
 nominated for three categories
 of Architecture Awards,
 a great deal about its
 national significance.
 It demonstrates clearly
 old buildings, even such
 unusable ones as an old
 station, are not always write-
 off as this project shows, they
 can be even more significant the
 around.

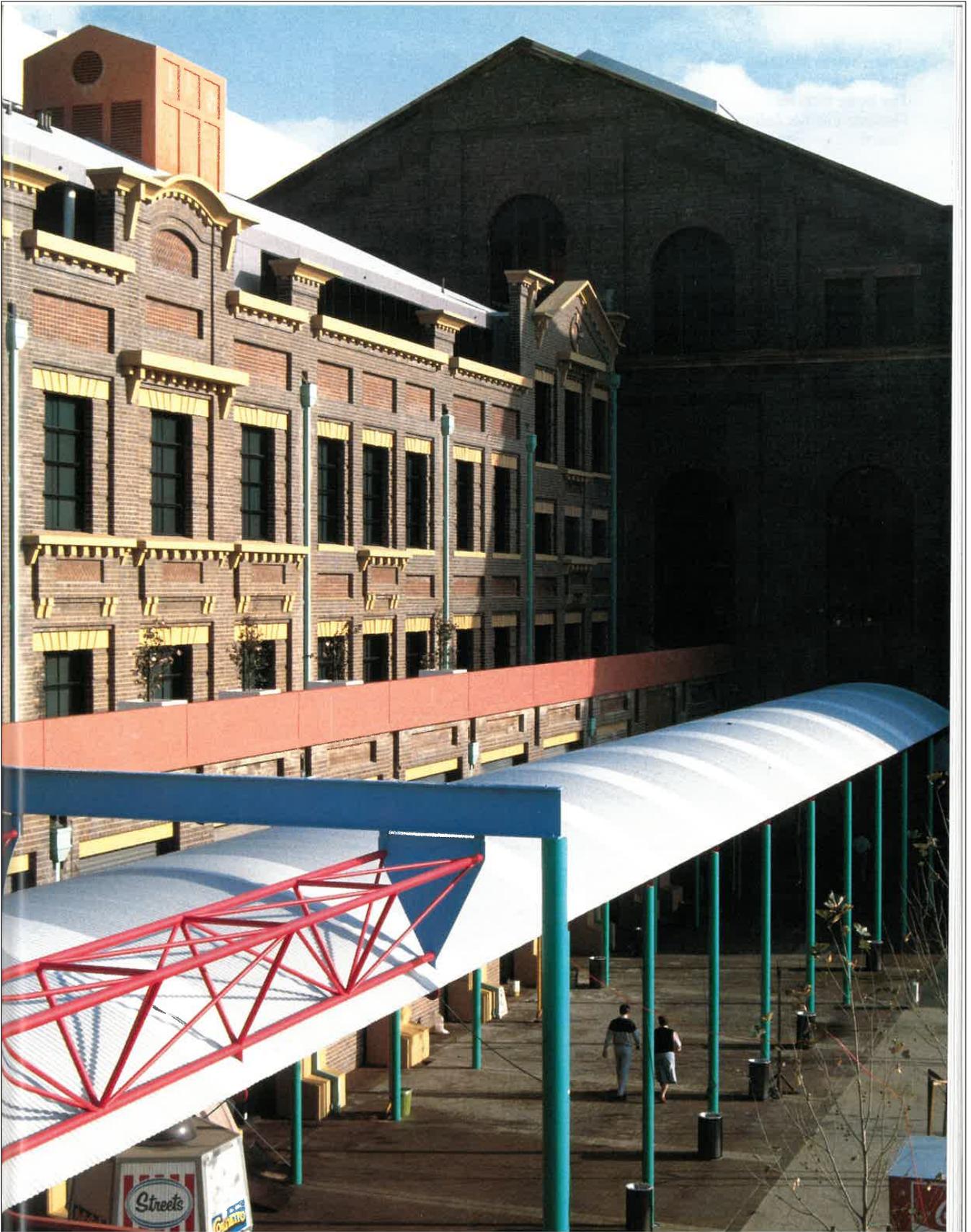
Powerhouse used to generate
 electricity for the city's tram system and
 the space of the old building
 has been recycled and a major new
 building. The result a great place
 to explore and be transported
 and of memorabilia.
 The Jury could have
 been misled by the exhibits too but
 they have been unfair. After all,
 architects get to use such
 props as space craft,
 aeroplanes as interior design
 a reality is the building will
 stand at project, even if all its
 are more mundane.

It is a triumph to Darling Harbour has
 popularity but the project
 has been a success without this
 actually it is interesting
 the skill in converting the
 because of the fun created
 by building and because of the
 old quality of its display spaces.
 The most impressive aspect of
 is in the way it handles space.
 It provides a sense of
 grand expectation, giving a
 private welcome to a building
 and exciting interiors.
 One of the interior exhibition
 spaces is quite brilliantly
 designed and enriching the
 overall spaces while providing
 a background for the myriad

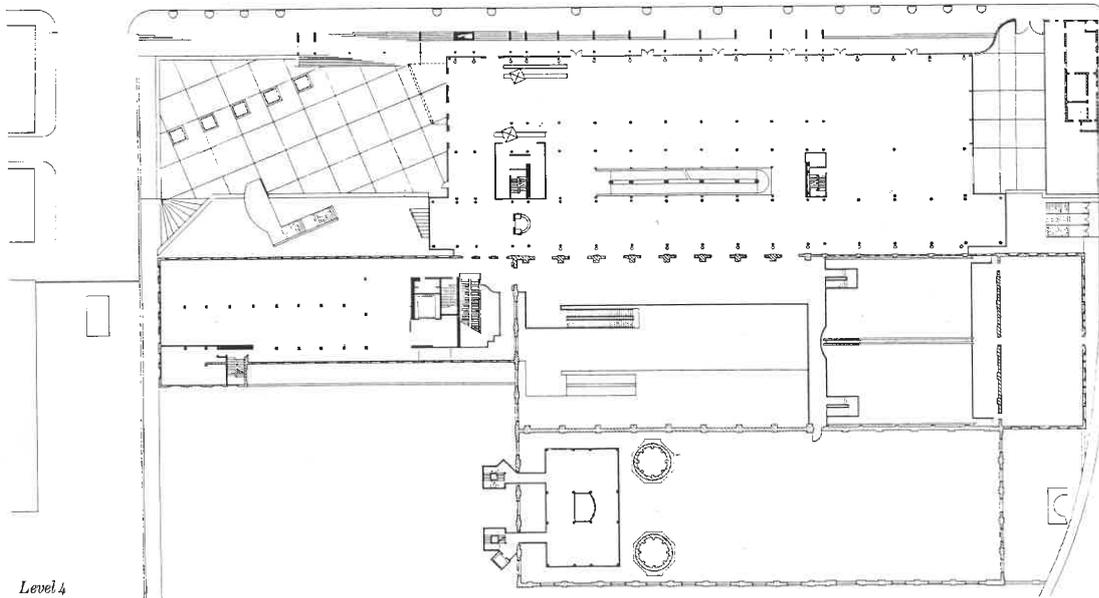


The Sydney Powerhouse is exuberant,
 brash, exhibitionist and, above all, fun.
 Old and new blends well, but wisely the
 temptation to copy the old structure has
 properly been resisted.
 Large numbers of people visit the
 Powerhouse but the planning of interior
 spaces is an important change from the
 norm. We are used to museums forcing
 visitors along rigid routes through an
 exhibition. The Powerhouse is
 refreshingly different, even confusing.
 The visitor is left intentionally
 wondering if they have seen everything
 and thinking that a return visit would be
 worthwhile. This is a charm seldom found
 in contemporary work but well loved in
 traditional museums.

remains for change and growth, yet one is
 never left with a sense of incompleteness.
 In an era which demands the
 separation of architecture, interiors
 and exhibition design, this project
 demonstrates that they are very much
 part and parcel of the same family. The
 result is stunning. Public acceptance
 and enthusiasm is overwhelming.
 The Sydney Powerhouse is a powerful
 exhibit, an exhibition and a design centre.
 It will make a significant contribution to
 architecture in raising the general design
 consciousness of all its visitors in an
 entertaining and memorable way. (AA)

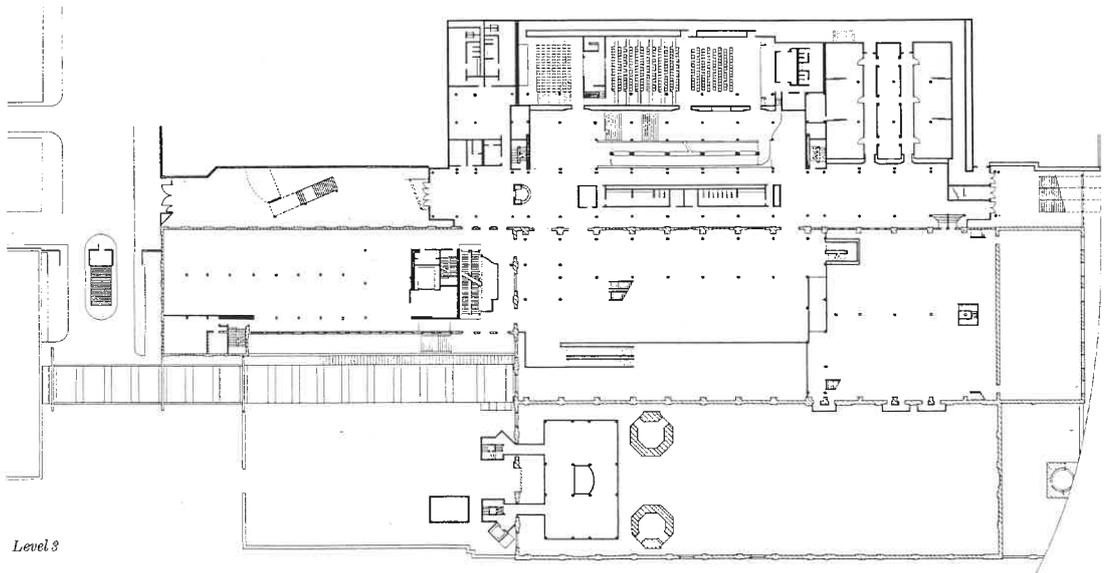
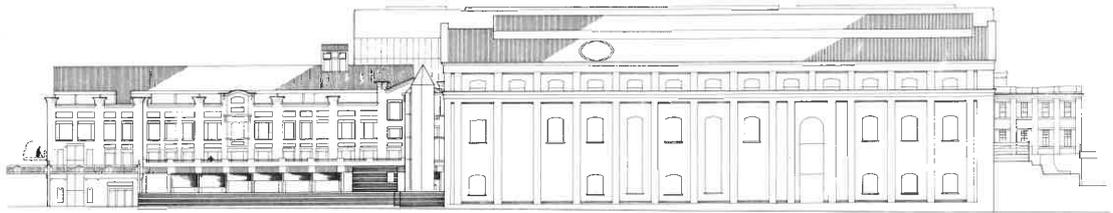


Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
The President's Award
The Belle Interiors Award
Finalist: The Sir Zelman Cowen
Award



48 Architecture Australia Awards 1988

11.0 Appendix C: 1988 AIA Awards - Jury Citation (Powerhouse Museum)



Architect

NSW Public Works Department,
Architectural Division
Government Architect: J W Thomson
Principal Architect: Lionel Glendenning
Project Architect: Sam Broudo
Architects: Bruce Palmer, Allan
Blackmore

Project Manager

Peter Rochaix

Construction Manager

Sam Manion

Project Engineer

Warwick Farley

Structural Engineer

Bond James Laron Murtagh

Mechanical Engineer

Public Works Dept: Dave Rowe

Electrical Engineer

NSW Public Works Dept

Quantity Surveyor

Northercroft Partnership

Acoustics

Wilkinson & Murray

Security Engineer

Firewood & Hartill

Hydraulic Engineer

Dave Creasey & Associates

Fire Services

D Rudd & Partners

Principal Design Consultants

Denton Corker Marshall

Museum Consultants

Smithsonian Institute, Washington

Interior Design Consultant

March Freedman

Exhibition Designers

NSW Public Works Dept

Denton Corker Marshall

Neil Burley & Associates

Campbells

Museum Design Department

Architecture Australia Awards 1988 49



Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
The President's Award
The Belle Interiors Award
Finalist: The Sir Zelman Cowen
Award



South elevation

Architecture Australia Awards 1988 51

120 ARCHITECTURE IN TRANSITION

1988

THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM HARRIS STREET, ULTIMO
 ARCHITECT: NSW GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT
 (GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT: J.W. THOMPSON, PROJECT ARCHITECT: LIONEL GLENDENNING)



With a virtually 50/50 ratio of new to existing buildings the Powerhouse Museum is significantly different to the Queen Victoria Building and the Wharf Theatre, two contemporary winners of the Sulman Medal which look one hundred per cent heritage. The Powerhouse's character comes out of its blend of new and old architectures.

The task for the Powerhouse team was to accept the cavernous interiors of a stripped-out, derelict power station and then to add masses of floor space and change its use from heavy industry to popular entertainment, keeping in mind that in fact not many of the museum's holdings are the size of a cargo aeroplane or a steam locomotive. Thus, large exhibits are housed in the old machinery halls and the extensive new buildings are set out parallel to the long dimension of the halls with the new west building occupying the space between the halls and Harris Street, used for entry, orientation and small exhibits.

The symbolic and aesthetic choices made for this large new building represent the architectural strategy at the Powerhouse. The NSW Government Architect's choice of the same vaulted roofs

as Parklea Prison is curious and probably more akin to an airy Darling Harbour aesthetic than to either the conventional idea of a museum, or a street of 19th and early 20th century buildings such as we find in Harris Street. There is an awkwardness here arising from the blunt way that these new buildings have been related to the old, neither boldly new nor effectively connected. No such quibble can be had with the real reason for visiting the Powerhouse, the interior spaces and the materials in them. Here, the old and new are almost seamlessly combined and appropriately, the exhibits overwhelm interior architecture, drawing us through a series of connected space which reveal the contents successively.

Architecture in Australia, Awards 1988, pp. 48-51.

1 Powerhouse Museum (1988), colour photograph, exterior detail, Andrew Frolows, 1989. Reproduced courtesy Powerhouse Museum 2 Powerhouse Museum (1988), colour photograph, exterior, photographer unknown. Department of Public Works & Services 3 Powerhouse Museum (1988), colour photograph, exterior landscape view with city, Andrew Frolows, 1989. Reproduced courtesy Powerhouse Museum 4 Powerhouse Museum (1988), b&w photograph, interior of turbine hall during construction, photographer unknown. DPWS

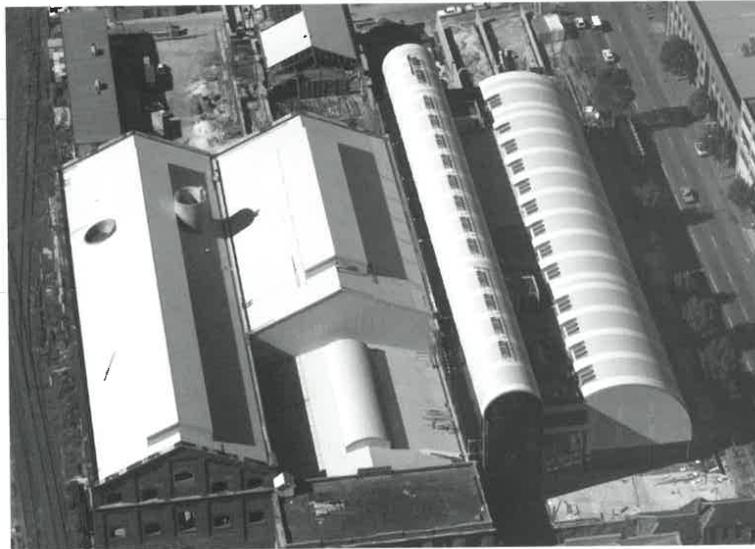
JURY

Architects
 KEN WOOLLEY
 SUZANNE DANCE
 DAVID LOGAN
 PROF BARRY MAITLAND

Others
 LEO SCHOFIELD
 Journalist



THE SULMAN AWARD 121



2



4